

STATE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY OF IOWA
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

The Annals of Iowa

Volume 64 | Number 1 (Winter 2005)

pps. 87-88

A History of Missouri, Volume 6, 1953-2003

ISSN 0003-4827

Copyright © 2005 State Historical Society of Iowa. This article is posted here for personal use, not for redistribution.

Recommended Citation

"A History of Missouri, Volume 6, 1953-2003." *The Annals of Iowa* 64 (2005), 87-88.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.10880>

Hosted by [Iowa Research Online](#)

lieved that the future of the civil rights movement was at stake in the battle over democratization of the organization" (127). In addition to redistributing power within the NAACP from the Wilkins-controlled national organization to the grassroots, the Young Turks pushed the NAACP to focus on the needs of the poor and to cooperate with advocates of Black Power. When the Turks lost their 1968 convention challenge and their ability to influence the organization, Lewis severed all ties to the NAACP. *Dissent in Wichita* contributes significantly to civil rights studies by telling the story of this failed internal revolution for the first time and by modeling how to integrate a midwestern case study with the events and trends of the national movement.

Our understanding of the struggle for black equality after World War II will change significantly as we add the study of communities outside of the South and of varying populations. In her conclusion, Eick calls for the study of "specific cities outside the South before broad generalizations about the movement in the Midwest (or in the North or West) are presented with much certainty" (208). How will the untold histories of civil rights activities in Des Moines, Davenport, Dubuque, or any Iowa community contribute to this new conceptualization?

A History of Missouri, volume 6, 1953–2003, by Lawrence H. Larsen. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004. ix, 212 pp. Tables, essay on sources, index. \$39.95 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

Reviewer John D. Buerker is professor emeritus of history at the University of Wisconsin–Parkside. He is the author of volume 4 of the *History of Wisconsin* and coeditor of the *Encyclopedia of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*.

The more things in Missouri change, apparently, the more they remain the same. On the one hand, according to Lawrence H. Larsen, "floods, contaminated waste sites, federal activities, court cases, equal rights, minorities, desegregation, education, organized labor, crime, religion, sports, and cultural change all formed a mosaic of life in Missouri as the state crossed the bridge from the twentieth to the twenty-first century." On the other hand, "earlier trends continued with few new wrinkles. The state moved along in keeping with its Show Me State traditions. . . . There were few dramatic new beginnings" (155). (One clear exception was the U.S. Census Bureau's transfer of the state from its North Central to Midwest Region.) Such, it would seem, are the wages of writing a history of the very recent past.

Larsen candidly admits the limitations inherent in writing such a history. The sheer volume of undigested source material is staggering, so his strategy was to "research and compile *representative* [emphasis

mine] material, analyze it, bring matters together into a whole, and show how Missouri progressed and changed at a significant juncture in its history" (ix). In the process, he has crafted a 20-page essay on sources that should prove an invaluable resource for other scholars. Larsen is also to be commended for generally avoiding the pitfalls of conflating personal reminiscences with historical analysis.

Among the defining trends that shaped the state's course between 1953 and 2003 were the end of legal segregation, the explosion of the recreation and entertainment industries, the increased power of the Republican Party, extensive suburbanization, a dramatic increase in the size, scope, and functions of state government, the significant influx of African Americans and other racial minorities, and the exponential expansion of higher education. Most of the book's seven tightly written chapters "detail the development of modern Missouri and show how it fared in relationship to the rest of the nation" (3) by focusing on a single aspect of that evolution and using 1953 and 2003 as benchmarks. One of the most interesting chapters looks at change and continuity over time in seven selected small towns ("bedrocks of stability"), as well as in Missouri's six "outstate" small cities: Cape Girardeau, Columbia, Jefferson City, Joplin, St. Joseph, and Springfield. Equally insightful is his analysis of the efforts of the state's two metropolises to "keep abreast of change," especially in transportation and urban renewal, sometimes at considerable cost (82).

In his treatment of the state's political history under its 1945 constitution, the author finds the key in the slow, steady striving for equality by women, racial and ethnic minorities, and organized labor and in the achievement of parity by the Republican Party. Of special interest in the final chapter is Larsen's discussion of two Missouri-based Supreme Court decisions of crucial significance in the national "culture wars": *Cruzan v. Missouri Board of Health* and *Webster v. Reproductive Services*. All things considered, Larsen has done a first-rate job of meeting the challenges of his daunting task, thereby providing future historians of twentieth-century Missouri with a solid foundation upon which to build.

History of South Dakota, 4th edition, revised, by Herbert S. Schell, revised by John E. Miller. Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2004. xviii, 425 pp. Illustrations, maps, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$24.95 paper.

Reviewer Terrence J. Lindell is professor of history at Wartburg College. He has researched and written about Populism in South Dakota, among other topics of interest.

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.